

Victoria de los Angeles

Five Centuries of Spanish Song

(1300-1800)

RCA VICTOR
LM-2144
RED SEAL



A "New Orthophonic" High Fidelity Recording



FIVE CENTURIES OF SPANISH SONG

(1300-1800)

VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES, Soprano, with Instrumental Ensemble

SIDE 1 Gothic Period

- Band 1 — Anonymous **Mariam matrem** (Mary, Mother)
 Band 2 — Anonymous **Ay, triste vida corporal** (Oh, this sad earthly life)

Renaissance Period

- Band 3 — J. Cornago **Qué es mi vida preguntáis** (What is my life, you ask)
 Band 4 — Anonymous **Pastorcico non te aduermas** (Little shepherd, don't you sleep)
 Band 5 — D. Pisador **Porqué es dama tanto quereros** (Lady, why do I love you so)
 Band 6 — D. Pisador **No me llares segalaherba** (Call me not "segalaherba")
 Band 7 — Anonymous **Ay, luna que reluces** (O moon that shines)
 Band 8 — E. Valderrábano **De dónde venís amore** (Love, whence do you come)

SIDE 2 Baroque Period

- Band 1 — Anonymous **En esta larga ausencia** (In this long absence)
 Band 2 — J. del Vado **Molinillo que mueles amores** (The mill that mills love)
 Band 3 — A. LITERES **Confiado jilguerillo** (Confident little finch)
 Band 4 — Manuel Plá **Seguidillas religiosas** (Religious Seguidillas)
 Band 5 — Anonymous **Canción de cuna** (Cradle Song)
 Band 6 — B. de Laserna **Jilguerillo con pico de oro** (The finch with the golden beak)
 Band 7 — J. Palomino **El Canapé** (The Settee)

(Recorded in England)

When at a recital nowadays a part is devoted to Spanish songs, there nearly always appear on the program, rather as if they were compulsory and indispensable, the famous names of Granados, Falla, Turina, Nin, etc. If it is true that these Spanish composers mark the zenith of our present-day song, it is no less certain that these songs are also the living testimony to the continuity of other, much older songs, which are part of the ancient Spanish musical tradition. My foremost wish, then, in selecting the songs on this record has been to pay tribute to, and make known, even if only in very small measure, this neglected, even unknown, facet of Spanish song.

It is extremely interesting that in the case of Spain we find in its music, as in that of no other country, a close and intimate relationship between popular and artistic elements, and this relationship has been maintained without interruption from the melodies and *cantigas* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the songs of our own day. I may recall here the very apt comment of Mr. Gilbert Chase, who said that "from the human angle, we get a more vivid and intimate picture of Spanish life from these songs than from many ponderous tomes of history. There are the Spanish people as they lived and loved, happily or unhappily, always intensely human." How true this is! And what a splendid contrast of emotions we receive when listening to these melodies with their proper texts!

Throughout this music appear the feelings of those artists who, with exquisite sensibility, knew how to capture and convey to us the soul of Spain in their respective generations.

VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES

THE MUSIC GOTHIC PERIOD

The conquest of Spain by the Arabs brought into being in the Christian courts of Europe a chivalrous and artistic spirit, which crystallized into a predilection for the cult of the Virgin Mary and a special consideration for woman and love. The first two compositions are in fact songs to the Virgin, both of them of the early fourteenth century, but of completely different musical types. The religious canticle *Mariam matrem* belongs to the venerable Codex in Montserrat known as the "Llibre vermell" on account of its vermilion binding; in it are songs of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, which were collected "in order that the pilgrims of that sanctuary should sing and dance honest things and so that they should thus not disturb those devoting themselves to prayer and meditation in the same church." The solo song *Ay, triste vida corporal* comes from the fourteenth century *Mystery of Elche*, still performed in Spain in the revised sixteenth century version.

RENAISSANCE PERIOD

At the brilliant Court of Alfonso V, a veritable artistic and literary center of the Renaissance of the fifteenth century, there was cultivated the polyphonic love song with Spanish lyrics, of which *Qué es mi vida preguntáis* is a characteristic example. This type of song gradually detached itself from the artificial technique of the Flemish school, and culminated in the repertoire of the secular song of the Court of the Catholic Monarchs, to which belongs the light-hearted *villancico*, *Pastorcico non te aduermas*.

This is also the period when there flourished in Spain a brilliant repertoire for the *vihuela de mano* (ancestor of the guitar), of which we give two very beautiful songs — accompanied here, however, on the harpsichord instead of the *vihuela*. The first of these is a lament, *Porqué es dama tanto quereros*; the second, *No me llares segalaherba*, is a lively, animated *villancico*. There is an intensely popular flavor about *Ay, luna que reluces*; *De dónde venís amore* is another *villancico*.

BAROQUE PERIOD

The seventeenth century was, for Spain, the century of the paintings of Velázquez and Murillo, and the writings of Lope de Vega, Tirso and Calderón. It was also the century of the incipient opera, of the *zarzuela* and of various types of secular music which enjoyed great favor at the Spanish Court and among the Castilian nobility.

En esta larga ausencia is a very beautiful love song by an anonymous composer, to a text by Lope de Vega. The composer of *Molinillo que mueles amores*, Juan del Vado, was an excellent violinist who was in the royal service. The text belongs to the "Baile de la naranja" ("Orange dance") which occurs in Lope's *San Isidro Labrador en Madrid*, and the dance still survives to this day in certain regions of Spain. *Confiado jilguerillo* comes from a *zarzuela heroica* by Antonio Literes entitled *Acis y Galatea*, first performed in 1708.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century Spanish music underwent considerable Italian influence to the detriment of the national output; but before long Spanish taste reacted vigorously against this subordination. This is exemplified by the *Seguidillas religiosas* by Manuel Plá, full of popular flavor and grace.

The real reaction against the Italianate influence on the Spanish theater came with the introduction of the *tonadilla escénica* (stage musical interlude), which flourished in the second half of the eighteenth century. These *tonadillas* dealt with an extensive variety of subjects. The favorite types of personages were those taken from the lower strata of society, above all, those *majos* and *majas* (gallants and their womenfolk) immortalized by Goya in his paintings. The beautiful *Canción de cuna* by an anonymous composer comes from a *tonadilla* entitled *El Gurrumino* ("The Henpecked Husband"). Note the contrast between this and the arietta *Jilguerillo con pico de oro* by Blas de Laserna, from *Los amantes chasqueados* ("The Disappointed Lovers"). From it, we can realize how the writers of *tonadillas*, while displaying their familiarity with the work and style of Haydn and Mozart, move in an atmosphere which exudes the typical grace and elegance of the popular Spanish music of that period. Much the same may be said of the picaresque song from *El Canapé*, a work performed in 1769. Very successful at the time, this is a curious example of solo narrative *tonadilla*, with all the charm of the atmosphere of the Madrid of that time.

Notes by JOSÉ MARIA LAMAÑA

NOTE: Although it has not been possible to give to the fourteenth and seventeenth century songs their true character and atmosphere by accompanying them with the instruments proper to each period, in this recording ensembles of modern instruments have been employed which attempt, as far as possible, to capture the spirit and coloring of the authentic instruments. For the accompaniments of items 3-6 on Side 2 a string quintet with harpsichord has been preferred; for the final picaresque song the version by Maestro Bernard for small orchestra has been considered more suited to the character and period of the work. The instrumental adaptations of items 4, 5 and 7 on Side 2 have been made from the voice-and-piano versions of José Subira; that of *Jilguerillo con pico de oro* from the version by the violinist Joan Manen.

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RCA VICTOR



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
"NEW ORTHOPHONIC" HIGH FIDELITY

LM
2144
(H2RP-3218)

In Spanish

SIDE 1
RED SEAL

- Band 1—Anonymous MARIAM MATREM
- Band 2—Anonymous AY, TRISTE VIDA CORPORAL
- Band 3—Cornago QUE ES MI VIDA PREGUNTÁIS
- Band 4—Anonymous PASTORCICO NON TE ADUERMAS
- Band 5—Pisador PORQUÉ ES DAMA TANTO QUEREROS
- Band 6—Pisador NO ME LLAMES SEGALAHERBA
- Anonymous
- Band 7—AY, LUNA QUE RELUCES
Valderrábano
- Band 8—DE DÓNDE VENÍS AMORE
Victoria de los Angeles, *Soprano*
with Instrumental Ensemble
(Recorded in England)

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LONG 33 1/3 PLAY

RCA VICTOR



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
"NEW ORTHOPHONIC" HIGH FIDELITY

LM
2144
(H2RP-3219)

In Spanish

SIDE 2
RED SEAL

Band 1—Anonymous EN ESTA LARGA AUSENCIA
Band 2—del Vado MOLINILLO QUE MUELES AMORES
Band 3—Literes CONFIADO JILGUERILLO
Band 4—Piá SEGUIDILLAS RELIGIOSAS
Band 5—Anonymous CANCIÓN DE CUNA
Band 6—de Laserna JILGUERILLO CON PICO DE ORO
Palomino Band 7—EL CANAPÉ
Victoria de los Angeles, Soprano
with Instrumental Ensemble
(Recorded in England)

LONG **33 $\frac{1}{3}$** PLAY

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